

# APPENDIX M

## **State Board Policy 1029, June 1990 - Definition of Serious Mental Illness**

## **POLICY MANUAL**

### **State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services Board Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services**

#### **POLICY 1029(SYS)90-2**

**SUBJECT:** Definitions of Priority Mental Health Populations

**AUTHORITY:** Board Minutes Dated May 23, 1990

Effective Date June 27, 1990

Approved by Board Chairman s/Greer D. Wilson, Ed.D.

**REFERENCES:** Comprehensive State Plan, 1990-1996  
Core Services Taxonomy III, December 20, 1988  
Policy 4027 (CSB) 87-11 Community Support Programs for Persons  
with Serious Mental Illness  
Policy 1022 (SYS) 87-10 Long-Term Care of Persons with Mental  
Disabilities

**BACKGROUND:** Although there is a wide range of categories and classifications of mental health disorders, the populations defined in this policy are delineated as priority populations for mental health service system development. Given limited state resources and human resources available for the support and expansion of mental health services, it is the intent of this policy to define priority groups for targeting of these resources. These definitions shall be used for purposes of data collection and reporting, budget guidance, resource allocation and other Departmental uses.

**PURPOSE:** To establish State Board policy that defines the following priority mental health populations: adults with serious mental illness, children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbance and children at risk of developing serious emotional disturbance

**POLICY** It is the policy of the State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services Board that serious mental illness be defined as follows: Adults with serious mental illnesses are individuals, 18 years of age and older, who have a severe and/or persistent mental or emotional disorder that seriously impairs their functioning relative to such primary aspects of daily living as personal relations, living arrangements or employment. Individuals who are seriously mentally ill and who have also been diagnosed as having a substance abuse disorder or mental retardation are included. The population is defined along three dimensions: (a) diagnosis, (b) level of disability and (c) duration of the illness.

(a) Diagnosis

There is a major mental disorder diagnosable under DSM-III-R (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition, Revised in 1987), which is a schizophrenic, major affective, paranoid, organic, or other psychotic disorder, personality disorder, or other disorder that may lead to a chronic disability.

(b) Severe, Recurrent Disability Resulting from Mental Illness

The disability results in functional limitations in major life activities. Individuals typically meet at least two of the following criteria, on a continuing or intermittent basis:

- (1) Is unemployed, is employed in a sheltered setting or supportive work situation, has markedly limited or reduced employment skills or has a poor employment history.
- (2) Requires public financial assistance for out-of-hospital maintenance and may be unable to procure such assistance without help.
- (3) Has difficulty in establishing or maintaining a personal social support system.

Requires help in basic living skills such as hygiene, food preparation or money management.

Exhibits inappropriate behavior which results in intervention by the mental health and/or judicial system.

(c) Duration

Individuals are expected to require services of an extended duration or the treatment history meets at least one of the following criteria:

- (1) Has undergone psychiatric treatment more intensive than outpatient care more than once in a lifetime (e.g., crisis response services, alternative home care, partial hospitalization or inpatient hospitalization).
- (2) Has experienced an episode of continuous, supportive residential care, other than hospitalization, for a period long enough to have significantly

disrupted the normal living situation.

It is the policy of the State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services Board that serious emotional disturbance in children and adolescents, ages birth through 17, be defined as follows:

- (1) A defined serious mental health problem that can be diagnosed under DSM-III-R; and/or all of the following
- (2) Problems in personality development and social functioning which have been exhibited over at least one year's time; and
- (3) Problems which are significantly disabling based upon the social functioning of most youngsters their age; and
- (4) Problems that have become more disabling over time; and
- (5) Service needs that require significant intervention by more than one agency.

It is the policy of the State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services Board that children ages 0 through 7, at risk of developing serious emotional disturbances, be defined as those who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Young children who exhibit behavior or maturity that is significantly different from most children their age, and which is not the result of developmental disabilities or mental retardation; or

Young children whose parents, or persons responsible for care, have predisposing factors that could result in their children developing serious emotional or behavioral problems; or

Young children who have experienced physical or psychological stressors which put them at risk for serious emotional or behavior problems.